



THE **COMO-HARRIET STORY**



The Como-Harriet Story

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The Museum is a non-profit educational corporation organized in Minnesota in 1962 to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's surface public transportation history. It operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and the Minnehaha Depot in Minneapolis, the Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul, the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Ry. in Osceola and the Steamboat Minnehaha in Excelsior.

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Front cover: A PCC at 42nd Street, where museum streetcars board today. The Swiss chalet style depot was built in 1914. Sandy Goodrick photo.

Inside front cover-top: In the very last month of streetcar operations, this Como-Harriet car is southbound on Hennepin Ave. at 28th St.

Inside front cover-bottom: In 1953, a southbound PCC car approaches the Linden Hills Blvd. stop. This location is now the south end of the restored Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.
Sandy Goodrick photo.



THE COMO-HARRIET STORY

WELCOME

It has been over 25 years since a dedicated group of volunteers reopened part of the best remembered streetcar line in the Twin Cities, the Lake Harriet portion of the Como-Harriet. Since then we've tried, given the modest means at our disposal, to convey some sense of what the streetcars meant to this city, back when they touched the lives of every citizen.

In these days of sweeping change that efficiently erases the past, we have found a real hunger by people to learn how things were before their time, or to relive their own past. Countless older people have that gleam of recognition in their eyes upon reentering the vehicle of their youth, where the compressor still thumps, the motors whine, the bells clang, the trolley wheel hisses, and the interior advertisements tout the Curtis Hotel, Lowry Hill Liquors and the Burlington Zephyrs to Chicago.

They are accompanied by their children or grandchildren, who have heard of trolleys on Mr. Rogers, but now discover the real thing. The children make their parents bring them back again and again. Many have grown up riding with us, and will hopefully bring their children when the time comes.

That's our goal—to educate the public, to ensure that this small part of the past lives on. To our visitors, our volunteers, our neighbors, and to the businesses whose ads made this booklet possible, thank you for 25 very good years.

*Louis Hoffman, General Superintendent
Como-Harriet Streetcar Line*

ALL ABOUT THE COMO-HARRIET LINE

The Como-Harriet became the second of four Twin City Rapid Transit Co. (TCRT) interurban lines linking the two downtowns when the Como Avenue line from Como Park in St. Paul was connected with the Como Avenue and Lake Harriet lines in Minneapolis in 1898. The other interurban electric lines were University Avenue, started in 1890, Selby-Lake, started in 1907 and Fort Snelling-Minnehaha, started in 1909.

Although it wasn't the fastest, busiest, or most direct route between the two downtowns, it provided the most enjoyable ride. It was the last streetcar line to be removed from service. For most of its life, the Como-Harriet line operated over a route that changed little but for some minor extensions on France Avenue S. on the Edina/ Minneapolis border.

Over the years, the Oak-Harriet line shared most of the Minneapolis route with the Como-Harriet. However, the Oak-Harriet cars terminated their runs at Oak Street SE. at the University of Minnesota's main campus in Minneapolis. Southbound Oak-Harriet cars followed the Como-Harriet route through the private right-of-way past Lakes Calhoun and Harriet but left the right-of-way parallel to W. 44th Street at Xerxes

Avenue S. and headed south to 50th Street, then east on 50th to the end of the line at Penn Avenue S. where it met cars of the Bryant-Johnson line.

Between 1906 and 1932, high-speed interurban cars, capable of mile-a-minute speeds, shared the Como-Harriet line but continued west another 15 miles through Hopkins to the resort communities of Excelsior, Deephaven and Tonka Bay located on Lake Minnetonka. That line was abandoned beyond Hopkins in 1932.

From 1906 until 1951, Como-Hopkins cars shared the Como-Harriet line but continued west on its right-of-way another 3.2 miles to downtown Hopkins just after crossing the famous Hopkins trestle over the railroad tracks.

Throughout most of its busy life, the Como-Harriet began with a counter clockwise loop around the heart of downtown St. Paul on Wabasha, 5th, Robert, 9th and Wabasha Streets, the same loop used by the University Avenue Interurban line. On Wabasha, the Como-Harriet cars passed the State Capitol.

From Wabasha, they ran north on Rice Street to Como Avenue, west on Como to Front Street, north on Chatsworth, then west on private right-of-way through beautiful Como Park,

passing under the ornate concrete Lexington Parkway bridge that remains to this day.

The cars then left Como Park at Hamline Avenue where they reentered Como Avenue, then across Snelling Avenue and along the southern edge of the 250-acre Minnesota State Fairgrounds. By design, that meant that all Como-Harriet cars were Fair Grounds specials during the 10-day run of the fair each August. At one time a special yard just off Como near Snelling could hold more than 100 streetcars to handle the state fair passenger traffic.

Como Avenue then became a winding thoroughfare through the attractive St. Anthony Park residential neighborhood until it reached Eustis Street, the point near the Minneapolis city limits where Minneapolis and St. Paul local cars would wye. It was also the junction where the University of Minnesota Inter Campus Special streetcars left the Como-Harriet line to proceed to the Agricultural Campus.

Three blocks west of Eustis Street is the city limits of Minneapolis. The Como-Harriet cars then traveled on Como Avenue SE until they turned south on 15th Avenue SE and entered the northern fringe of the U of M campus in Dinkytown.

Dropping down Wabasha Street past the State Capitol about 1910.



The line looped through downtown St. Paul. Car #1316 is boarding passengers on Wabasha St. at 7th St.

Cars then turned west on 4th Street SE, end of the first Minneapolis streetcar line in 1872. This was also near the terminus of the Minneapolis campus end of the Inter Campus Special line which shared Como-Harriet trackage between this point and Como and Eustis.

Como-Harriet cars proceeded west on 4th Street SE, along the edge of the campus, past the large residential homes that housed students and then crossed Central Avenue and entered the Old St. Anthony area of light to medium industry and shopping.





Streetcars passed through Como Park on their own right of way. The park station was just east of Lexington Avenue. An iron fence was erected between the tracks to prevent accidents, and pedestrians used this concrete arch bridge that remains in place today. This scene dates from about 1905. Sweet Studios photo for TCRT, Dennis Johnson collection.

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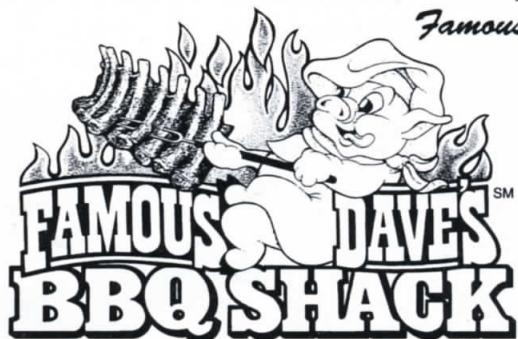
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Looking west from the Lexington Avenue overpass, an eastbound car runs through an open meadow.

Cars turned onto East Hennepin, crossed Nicollet Island past DeLaSalle High School and then the Mississippi River to the Great Northern Depot, torn down in 1979 after the opening of the Midway Amtrak Depot in St. Paul. Hennepin Avenue was extremely wide at this point to allow for heavy railroad passenger traffic around the depot. It was the only point in Minneapolis that required passenger safety islands for streetcar riders. Automobiles were forbidden from using these special streetcar lanes between the islands in front of the depot.

From the depot, Como-Harriet cars proceeded through the Gateway, an area that changed in character during the 56 years of streetcar operation from a home for immigrants to a home for the homeless. Then the cars clanked

through the glittering theater district of upper Hennepin and past the flashing marques of the Aster, Gopher, Lyric, RKO-Pan (later Mann), State and RKO-Orpheum theaters and out of downtown past Loring Park and through the infamous (and hair-raising) Hennepin-Lyndale "bottleneck." The I-94 Lowry Hill tunnel did away with the bottleneck in the 1970s.

The cars then scooted through residential and commercial neighborhoods, past West High School at 28th and Hennepin (closed in 1982), finally reaching their last major transfer point at Lake Street, the west terminus of another great interurban line, the Selby-Lake.

Excitement grew high once cars left Lake Street and turned west from Hennepin onto 31st Street and headed towards Lake Calhoun. At Irving

Avenue, the cars veered southwest from 31st Street and entered the private right-of-way that would be theirs to 44th and France Avenue with few stops in between.

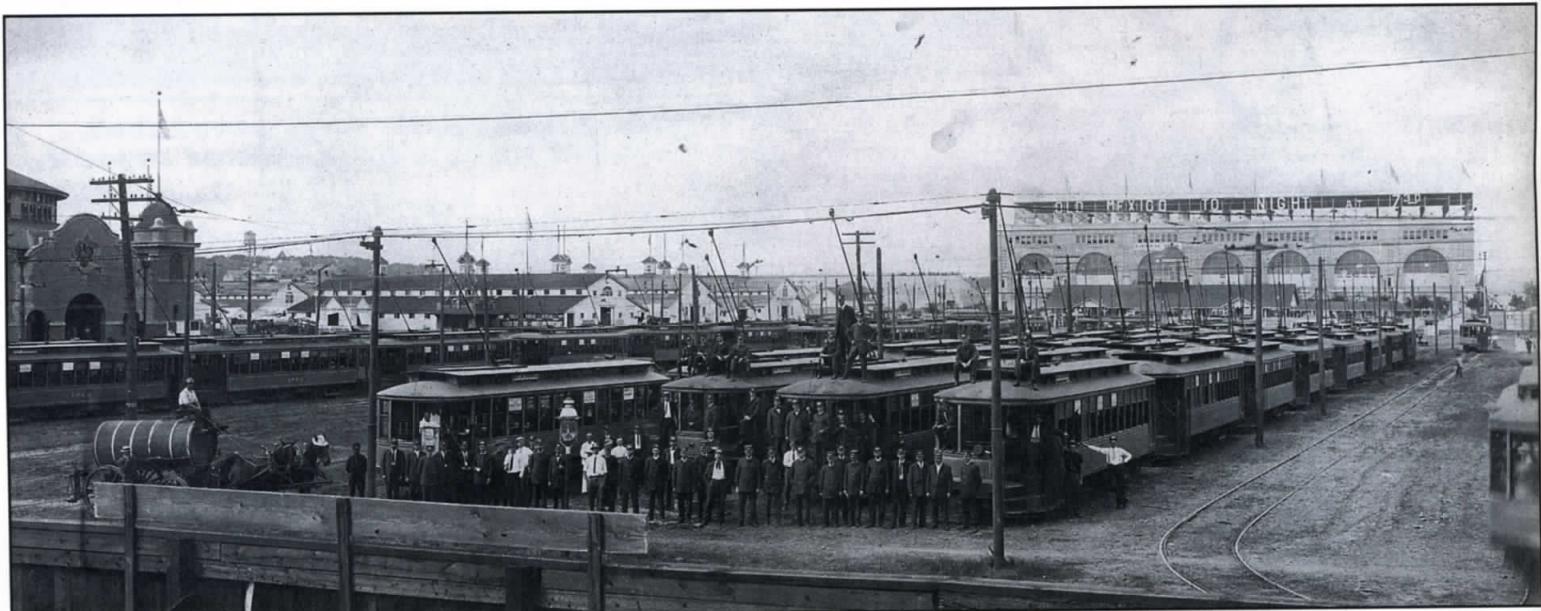
The rails were no longer buried in blacktop, concrete or brick but completely exposed right down to the wooden ties, just like a regular railroad track. The familiar iron bell-top overhead wire poles gave way to wooden poles. At first, the right-of-way looked more like an alley as it bordered the back yards of houses facing Irving and James Avenues until it reached 34th Street near the east shore of Lake Calhoun. Now the fun really began!

The cars crossed the narrow steel bridge that spanned 36th Street and the motormen turned up the controllers. Speed ranged from 40 mph to who knows? No more houses. Just open track and woods. First past Lakewood Cemetery, then under the William Berry Rd. bridge, through Lyndale Park and finally a stop sign at Lake Harriet Station at 42nd Street parallel to Queen Avenue S.

At this well-known intersection, an iron grille fence between the tracks kept passengers from wandering into the paths of streetcars headed in the opposite direction after they alighted. They used a pedestrian subway that still exists to cross under the tracks. The final station on the site was a sizable one built to look like a Swiss chalet. It had a covered platform, waiting room and a small store.

The station was torn down after the end of rail operations in 1954 but the

In 1912, most State Fair goers came by streetcar, and most of those via the Como-Harriet line. C. P. Gibson photo, J. R. Moscrop collection.





The streetcars passed between what is now the Great Harvest Bakery and Bayers Hardware. The square, windowless building by the tracks is the Harriet Terminal House, where electricity from the streetcar company's main power plant was transmitted towards Hopkins and Excelsior.



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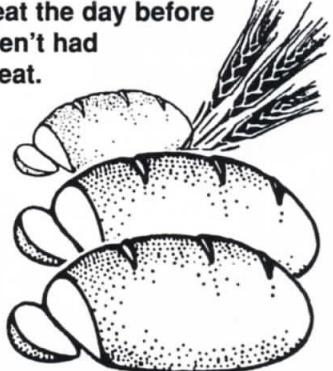
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expansive sidewalk beneath the large canopy remained for a while. Part of the original platform is in use today as the main passenger loading area. A manhole cover in the sidewalk still reads TCRT.

After leaving 42nd Street the cars continued on the wooded right-of-way as it skirted the northwest shore of Lake Harriet and passed under the Linden Hills Blvd. bridge. Tucked under that bridge today is the museum's streetcar barn.

The right-of-way then curved west to the Linden Hills shopping district at Upton Avenue. From this point, the right-of-way again was surrounded by houses and garages and motormen had to crank back on their controllers a bit. Three short blocks later, they reached Xerxes Avenue. Oak-Harriet cars turned south onto Xerxes at this point for the rest of their route.

From Xerxes, the right-of-way got less private as cars had to watch every street crossing until 44th and France. Como-Hopkins cars crossed France and continued on the right-of-way another three miles to Hopkins until that route was cut back to Brookside Avenue in Edina in 1951.

Como-Harriet cars then turned south off of the right-of-way onto France Avenue S. the city limits between Minneapolis, Morningside (now part of Edina) and



Above: In 1914 Como Avenue in Minneapolis near the city limits was a dirt road running through open country. Hibbard photo for TCRT.

Below: In order to accommodate the crush of students after World War II, the U of M placed surplus military quonset huts on property at 29th and Como Avenue SE as student housing. Frank Butts photo.





After turning off 15th Avenue SE onto 4th Street, Como-Harriet cars entered Dinkytown. That's Bridgeman's at right. Bob Schumacher photo.



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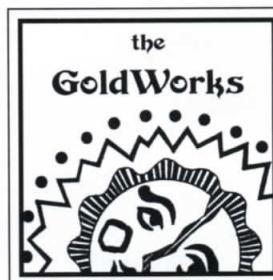


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Left: An Oak-Harriet car turns from 4th Street SE onto East Hennepin.

Below: Streetcars on Hennepin stopped at the front door of the Great Northern Station, newly opened in this 1914 scene. Hibbard Studio photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

Opposite page: 9th and Hennepin downtown, looking south. At left is the old Minneapolis Public Library. The sci-fi horror classic "Them", starring the then unknown James Arness and numerous giant ants, is showing at the Orpheum. Note how traffic stopped so alighting passengers could safely reach the curb. Bob Schumacher photo.

Edina. The cars reached their last commercial district in downtown Edina (50th and France) and proceeded through a residential neighborhood to the end of the line at 54th and France.

No one was heard to say they didn't get their token's worth after a ride on the Como-Harriet streetcar line.

The beginning

The Como-Harriet line was created in 1898 by the combination of the Como Avenue and Lake Harriet lines in Minneapolis and the Como Avenue line in St. Paul. But let's go back 20 years and

look at how the fragments of what was to be the Como-Harriet were put together.

The earliest traces of the line began in June 1878 when the Minneapolis Street Railway Co. (MSR) granted a lease to the newly-formed Lyndale Railway Co. to build a steam motor line from downtown Minneapolis to the then city limits at 26th Street.

In 1879, the new company changed its name to the Minneapolis, Lyndale & Lake Calhoun Ry. and built a narrow-gauge (3 ft) 4.5-mile single-track steam-powered motor line from 1st Street and Nicollet Avenue to 1st

Avenue S. (now Marquette Avenue in the downtown area), to 13th Street, back to Nicollet, south on Nicollet to 31st Street, west on 31st where it entered a curving right-of-way along the east shore of Lake Calhoun to a small waiting station at 34th Street.

Service was provided by two steam motors which pulled two second-hand 60-passenger coaches. Trains ran every 45 minutes from 6:45 a.m. to 10:45 p.m. Travel time was 35 minutes.

In 1880, the company extended the single-track on private right-of-way from Lake Calhoun to Lake Harriet. This is the



same right-of-way in use today by the museum. Several open passenger trailers were purchased second hand from New York and Philadelphia to handle the increasing business and added length of the line. A newspaper article at that time reported the following story.

"Travel to Lake Calhoun yesterday was large. The Motor Line cars were packed, as high as 1,200 going on a single train. Some of the motors made no stop between Washington Avenue and Oak Grove Street, on account of being packed so that it was impossible to take on the persons who were standing at each street corner. The police were on duty at the lake, and the best of order was preserved, although it became necessary to drive away a gang of street gamins who were making themselves obnoxious."

The company changed its name to Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka Ry. in 1881 to reflect its new line extension as it built a single-track from Lake Harriet to Excelsior, a distance of 15 miles. Passenger equipment was hauled by two new steam locomotives of conventional design. On June 15, 1882, the company operated its first



train to Excelsior on the shores of Lake Minnetonka. The large steam locomotives operated between Lake Calhoun and Excelsior and the smaller, quieter steam motors between Lake Calhoun and downtown Minneapolis. Steam locomotives were not allowed on Minneapolis streets.

The Motor Line operated 11 round trips per day during the summer months. Round trip fares from downtown Minneapolis were as follows: To Lake Calhoun and back, 25 cents; Lake Harriet, 35 cents; and Lake Minnetonka, 75 cents in the summer and \$1 in the winter.

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This is the notorious "Bottleneck" where Hennepin and Lyndale crossed next to the Walker Art Center. In 1945 a Como-Harriet car descends Lowry Hill followed by a Kenwood bus and a Bryant car. Minneapolis Star-Journal photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.

However, success of the steam line was short-lived and, due to financial problems, trackage from Lake Calhoun to Excelsior was abandoned in 1886. But the right-of way between Lakes Calhoun and Harriet didn't remain dormant for very long.

In 1887, the Minneapolis Street Railway (MSR) leased the Motor Line's property and equipment, restored service to Lake Harriet and constructed a pavilion on the northwest shore of the lake and later a waiting station/ platform at 42nd Street. The line was operated with steam equipment until Aug. 19, 1890.

Electric streetcars became practical in 1887, and companies across the country soon converted to the new power source. On Sept. 22, 1890, a new electric line opened (replacing the steam motor operation) from downtown Minneapolis to 31st Street. By May 24, 1891, the electric line was complete out to Lake Harriet. At the same time, the track gauge

was widened to standard gauge (4 feet 8 1/2 inches). To further call attention to this great improvement, the right-of-way from Lake Calhoun to Lake Harriet was illuminated at night by 40 powerful arc lights attached to overhead poles as a scenic attraction. The same year, MSR constructed a second Lake Harriet pavilion (pagoda-styled) to replace the 1887 building that burned down.

Track changes were made on Aug. 13, 1891 that rerouted the Lake Harriet line out Hennepin Avenue instead of Nicollet Avenue from downtown Minneapolis to 31st Street, a route it would take the rest of its life.

Como meets Harriet

As the downtown streetcar lines began expanding toward each other, the second interurban streetcar line was created when tracks on Como Avenue in Minneapolis and St. Paul were joined at the city limits on July 1, 1898,

creating the Como Interurban or Como-Interurban-Harriet streetcar line. The University Avenue line, completed in Dec. 1890, was the first interurban line.

At the same time, TCRT began building its own distinctive style of double-truck cars at its shops at 31st and Nicollet. The first 20 cars manufactured were placed on the new Como-Interurban-Harriet line.

After the new Grecian-styled pavilion was built in 1904, giant crowds again swarmed to Lake Harriet for summer concerts. Another article in the local papers read, "Harriet cars hummed, buzzed, and clanged out Hennepin Avenue all the way from the loop to the lake and beyond. Hot busy nights would find streetcars lined up for miles, bumper to bumper, filled to the gates with passengers. The more agile young boys and men liked to ride the bumpers and the roofs."

The glory years

In 1906 TCRT opened their Lake Minnetonka transportation empire, extending the Como-Harriet line beyond Hopkins to Excelsior, Tonka Bay and Deephaven. A fleet of 14 steamboats was assembled, including six new express boats designed to look like the streetcars. They met the cars at Excelsior, Wildhurst and Deephaven and provided hourly service all over the lake. From 1906 to 1911, three large ferry boats also transported the public to the company's Big Island Park, located in the middle of the lake. The steamboats lasted until 1926, when all but one was sunk off Big Island. One of these, the Minnehaha, was destined to be raised and restored to operation by the Minnesota Transportation Museum.

The 1911 Independence Day celebration marked the "linking of the lakes" ceremony, the opening of navigational canals between Calhoun, Isles, and Cedar Lake. People were coming out to Lake Harriet all day long and it was estimated that some 15,000 were in and around the Lake Harriet Pavilion at concert time. After the fireworks, it took until well after midnight before all of

the patrons had boarded the streetcars and headed for home.

A recurring problem in and around Lake Harriet was crowd control. On numerous occasions, the police were present to turn away potential concert-going patrons when the pavilion was full and to keep order. To aid in the enforcement effort, the new streetcar waiting station built in 1912 at 42nd and Queen contained a lock-up room in the basement called a "calaboose".

A siding on the Lake Harriet right-of-way between Upton and Xerxes was built and used for storing extra cars to meet the 10 p.m. evening traffic rush generated by the band concerts, pleasure boating and swimming.

On July 8, 1925, a windstorm struck the Lake Harriet area at about 6 p.m. and destroyed the concert pavilion, killing two people. Had the windstorm occurred an hour or two later, after the majority of the concert attendees had arrived, the loss of life would have been much greater. The disaster ended the era of grand pavilions. Never again did Lake Harriet see the immense traffic for concerts that had prevailed over the previous 40 years.

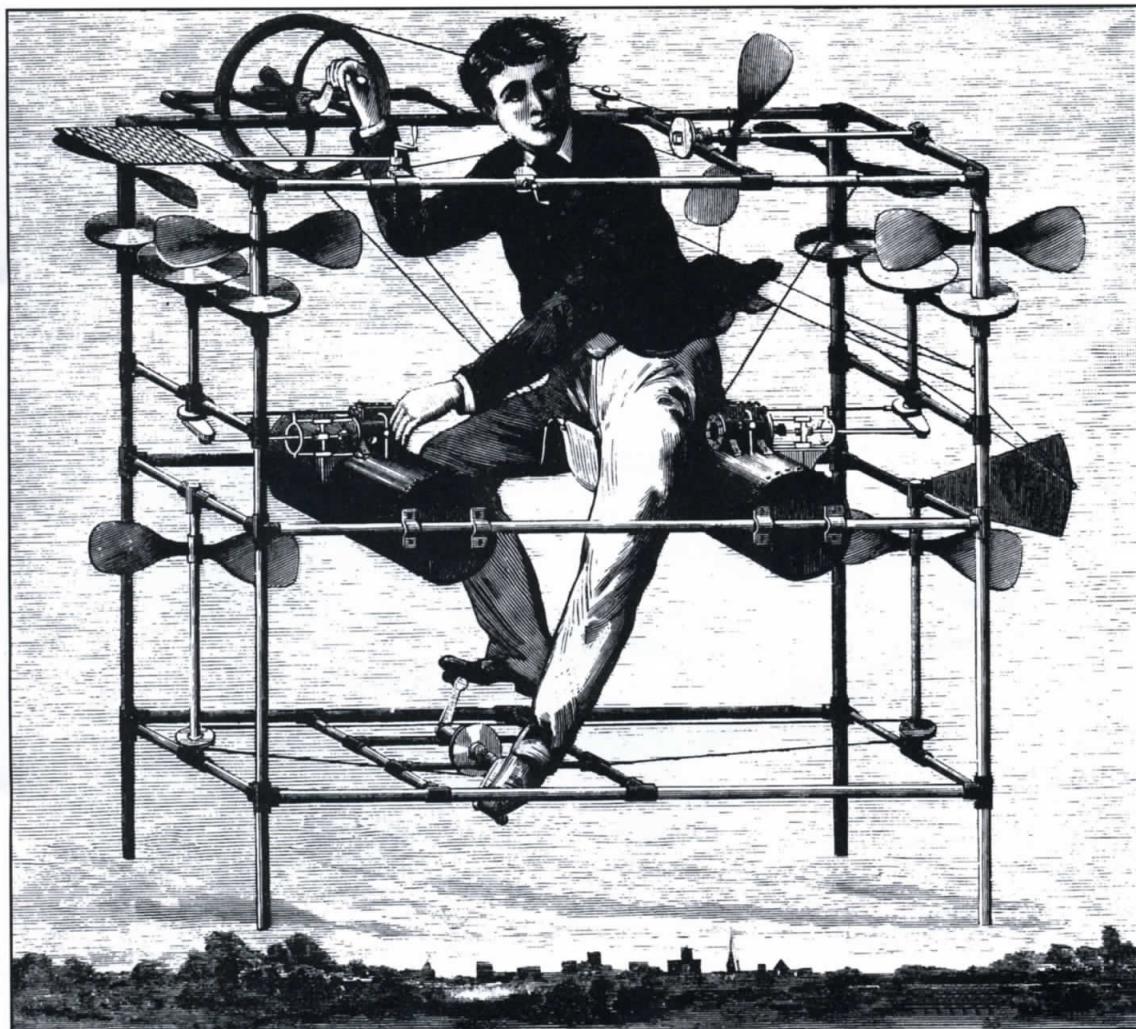
The final years

The first line to abandon the Lake Harriet right-of-way was Lake Minnetonka, cut back to 9th Avenue in Hopkins in 1932. In August 1951, the Como-Hopkins line was abandoned, but a portion of the right-of-way through Edina was kept intact. A loop was installed near Brookside Avenue.

Although PCC cars began running on Twin Cities lines in late 1946, the sleek, quiet streamlined cars didn't find their way onto the Como-Harriet line until late 1952 when abandonment of most of the streetcar lines began in earnest, creating a surplus of PCC cars.

The PCC cars ran on the line for only about a year as they were sold off to Mexico City, Newark and Shaker Heights, OH. The last several months of the Como-Harriet line found service provided entirely by the old standard cars as it had been for the previous 56 years, but now all one-man operated.

Finally in the wee hours of June 19, 1954, on schedule, the Como-Harriet line came to an abrupt end when car 1166 pulled into East Side Station at 1:34 a.m., loaded with many railfans who bid the old line "Au Revoir."



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After cresting Lowry Hill, a southbound car enters the intersection of Franklin and Hennepin. At far left is the legendary, and somewhat eccentric, Becky's Cafeteria, where Lowry's restaurant is now. James Foster collection.

The intersection of Lake and Hennepin has changed little since this view was taken about 1930. Minnesota Historical Society collection.





Between 31st and 34th Streets, the streetcar tracks ran next to the alley between Irving and James Avenue. MTM's own #1300 drops off a passenger at 33rd Street. Bob Schumacher photo.

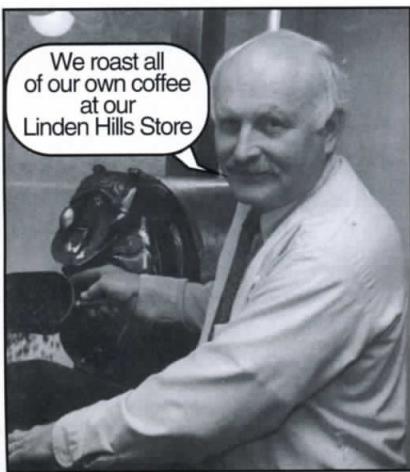
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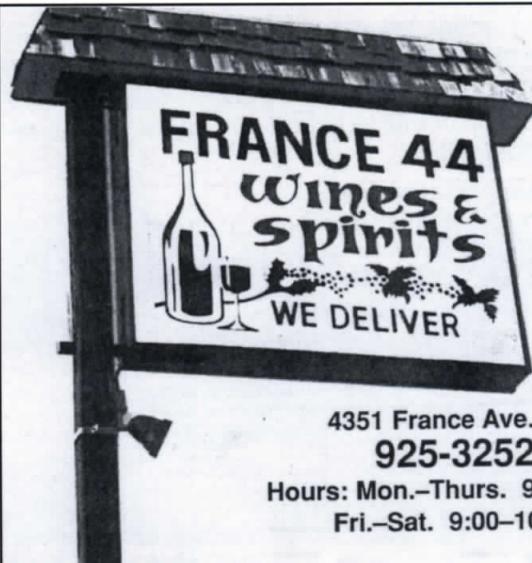


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CHRONOLOGY OF THE COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE

1872	Horsecar line opened from downtown Minneapolis to Dinkytown.	1902	<i>Como Avenue</i> line in Minneapolis through-routed with <i>Kenwood Park</i> . Part of service through-routed on Hennepin Avenue with <i>Lake Harriet</i> line. Part of <i>Lake Harriet</i> line through-routed with <i>Oak Street</i> line.	1947	Second track added on <i>France</i> from 50th to 51st Street. This was the last track extension to be built by TCRT.
1879	Narrow-gauge single-track steam-powered motor line constructed from 1st Street and Nicollet Avenue to Lake Calhoun.	1904	New <i>Lake Harriet</i> pavilion constructed on the northwest shore of <i>Lake Harriet</i> after the second one burned down in the winter of 1903.	1951	<i>Como-Hopkins</i> line discontinued; line cut back to <i>Brookside Avenue</i> in Edina, served by some <i>Como-Harriet</i> cars.
1880	Single-track extended from <i>Lake Calhoun</i> to <i>Lake Harriet</i> .	1905	<i>Como Avenue</i> through-routing with <i>Kenwood Park</i> line in Minneapolis discontinued. Private right-of-way extended to <i>Lake Minnetonka</i> once again as <i>Lake Minnetonka</i> line.	1952	Extensive one-man service begun.
1881	Single-track extension from <i>Lake Harriet</i> to <i>Excelsior</i> .	1906	<i>Como-Hopkins</i> service began over <i>Como-Harriet</i> trackage to 9th Avenue in <i>Hopkins</i> . Part of service from St. Paul operated through to <i>Hopkins</i> .	1953	Trackage on <i>France Avenue S.</i> from 44th to 54th Streets abandoned.
1882	First train ran to <i>Excelsior</i> .	1909	<i>Como-Harriet</i> service extended from <i>Lake Harriet</i> to 44th and <i>France</i> ; <i>Oak-Harriet</i> cars continued to terminate at <i>Lake Harriet</i> .	6-18 1954	Partial PCC service begun.
1886	Trackage from <i>Lake Calhoun</i> to <i>Excelsior</i> abandoned.	1913	<i>Oak-Harriet</i> service extended from <i>Lake Harriet</i> to <i>Xerxes</i> . Double track built on <i>Xerxes</i> from the right-of-way south to 50th Street.	6-19 1954	St. Paul portion of <i>Como-Harriet</i> line abandoned (east of <i>Eustis Street</i>). However, Minneapolis <i>Como-Harriet</i> cars operated through service to the state fair grounds at <i>Como</i> and <i>Snelling</i> from Aug. 29 to Sept. 7 during the 10-day run of the State Fair. Began all one-man service.
1887	Motor line property and equipment leased to Minneapolis Street Railway.	1921	Downtown St. Paul loop via <i>Wabasha</i> , 5th, <i>Robert</i> , 9th, <i>Wabasha</i> .	1962	<i>Como-Harriet</i> streetcar line abandoned; end of all rail operations.
1890	Last steam passenger operation. New electric line opened from downtown Minneapolis to 31st Street.	1925	<i>Lake Harriet</i> pavilion destroyed in a windstorm.	1963	Minnesota Railfans Association chartered cars #1300 and #1775 for a final ride over all electrified abandoned trackage. TCRT donated car #1300 to the MRA.
1891	Original <i>Lake Harriet</i> pavilion destroyed by fire. - <i>Como Avenue</i> line began service from downtown St. Paul to <i>Como Park</i> . -Electrification of line to <i>Lake Harriet</i> completed. -Track gauge widened to standard gauge (4-ft - 8 1/2 in.). Right-of-way from <i>Lake Calhoun</i> to <i>Lake Harriet</i> illuminated at night by 40 powerful arc lights. - <i>Como Avenue</i> Line began service in Minneapolis from 1st and <i>Hennepin</i> to 15th Avenue and <i>Como Avenue SE</i> . - <i>Lake Harriet</i> line routed out <i>Hennepin Ave</i> instead of <i>Nicollet Avenue</i> from downtown Minneapolis to 31st Street.	1925	<i>Como-Harriet</i> service extended south on <i>France Avenue</i> from 44th to 50th Streets. (single track).	1968	The Minnesota Transportation Museum was created from the MRA and assumed ownership of car #1300 which was in storage at the Minneapolis-Moline plant in <i>Hopkins</i> .
1894	<i>Como Avenue</i> line in Minneapolis through-routed with <i>Bryn Mawr</i> line.	1929	Second track added on <i>France Avenue S.</i> from 44th to 50th Streets. Single track built on <i>France</i> from 50th to 54th Streets.	1971	Restored car #1300 makes first run in the Minnesota Transfer Railway yard.
1898	Double track built on <i>Como Avenue SE</i> from 15th Avenue SE. in Minneapolis to <i>Eustis Street</i> just inside the city limits of St. Paul. Double track built on <i>Como Avenue</i> in St. Paul from <i>Como Park</i> to <i>Eustis Street</i> . This formed the second interurban line between Minneapolis and St. Paul called <i>Como-Interurban</i> or <i>Como-Interurban-Harriet</i> .	1931	<i>Como-Hopkins</i> service to <i>Deephaven</i> cut back to Sundays only.	1972	The MTM approaches the Minneapolis Park Board with a proposal to reopen a portion of the former <i>Como-Harriet</i> right-of-way as a museum streetcar line using ex-TCRT streetcar #1300. The idea was accepted.
		1932	<i>Lake Minnetonka</i> line abandoned from <i>Hopkins</i> to <i>Deephaven</i> , <i>Excelsior</i> and <i>Tonka Bay</i> .	1973	MTM reopened a 1,400 ft. single-track portion of the former <i>Como-Harriet</i> right-of-way from the Linden Hills bridge to just north of 42nd Street using streetcar #1300, powered by a gasoline engine-powered electric generator towed behind the car.
		1934	One-man owl service begun. 50th Street wye on <i>France</i> moved to 51st Street	1977	Single track extended to 2,600 ft.
		1939	Lake Harriet loop at <i>Upton Avenue</i> removed from service. The switches and the crossing on the main line were removed but the loop itself was not removed until 1950.	1973	Overhead wire strung.
				1977	First run over the extension to <i>Lake Calhoun</i> on its current length of 4,670 ft.

1981 Restored *Como-Harriet* line and car #1300 placed on National Register of Historic Sites.

1982 TCRT-built ex-Duluth streetcar #265 joins #1300 in revenue service on the *Como-Harriet* line; museum line carried its half-millionth passenger since the reopening of the line in 1971.

1986 Lake Harriet bandshell opens. Record single day ridership of 1719.

1990 Restored Duluth 1893 streetcar #78 begins service at Lake Harriet. Replica of 1900 Linden Hills built and opened to the public.

1991 Twin City PCC car #322 purchased from Cleveland and restoration begun.

1991 Linden Hills Depot opens. #78 makes first revenue trip.

1993 1 millionth passenger carried. 50th Reunion for "Motorettes" and "Conductorettes", the women who drove the streetcars in WWII.

1995 "Twin City Lines - The 1940's" published.

1997 Carbarn expansion completed.



The tracks crossed over 36th Street on a bridge and paralleled Richfield Road along the SE side of Lake Calhoun, which early in the century featured scalloped hedges. The peak-roofed building at left is the station for Lakewood Cemetery, and that's about where the present track ends. Hennepin County Historical Society collection.



The corner of Como and Carter in St. Anthony Park about 1930. TCRT photo.



This is "The Glen", the wooded s-curve between the Lake Harriet station and William Berry Road. James Foster collection.



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MTM's restored Como-Harriet Streetcar Line is an authentic recreation of a portion of the original line.

Most of the route follows the right-of-way laid out by the Minneapolis, Lyndale and Lake Calhoun Railway more than 115 years ago.

The single-track narrow-gauge line gave way to a double-track standard gauge line with the introduction of electric cars in 1891. The line then remained basically unchanged until abandonment of the street railway system in 1954. TCRT quickly removed the rails for salvage.

When MTM relaid the rails in 1970 and 1971, members spiked down the

museum's single track directly on TCRT's old southbound trackbed from the Linden Hills bridge to the pedestrian overpass just north of 42nd Street. The concrete overpass still had the old track anchors so alignment at that point was fairly accurate. The passing siding at 42nd Street was laid on TCRT's old northbound mainline from 42nd Street, north across the

overpass and about 200 feet down the wooded right-of-way.

North of that point, the single track was laid in the middle of the old double track right-of-way since the museum does not plan on laying a second mainline track. The track goes under the center of the William Berry bridge. Here, the route's identical match to the original line ends.

The portion of the Como-Harriet line serving the Minneapolis lakes began as the steam powered, narrow gauge "Motor Line", seen here on the east side of Lake Calhoun at about 34th Street, with the Lyndale Hotel in the background. Hennepin County Historical Society collection.





This is it, the last streetcar. On June 19, 1954, the day after regular service quit, the Minnesota Railfans Assn. chartered cars #1775 and #1300 for one final trip over the remaining trackage. They stopped for awhile at the now shabby Lake Harriet station.

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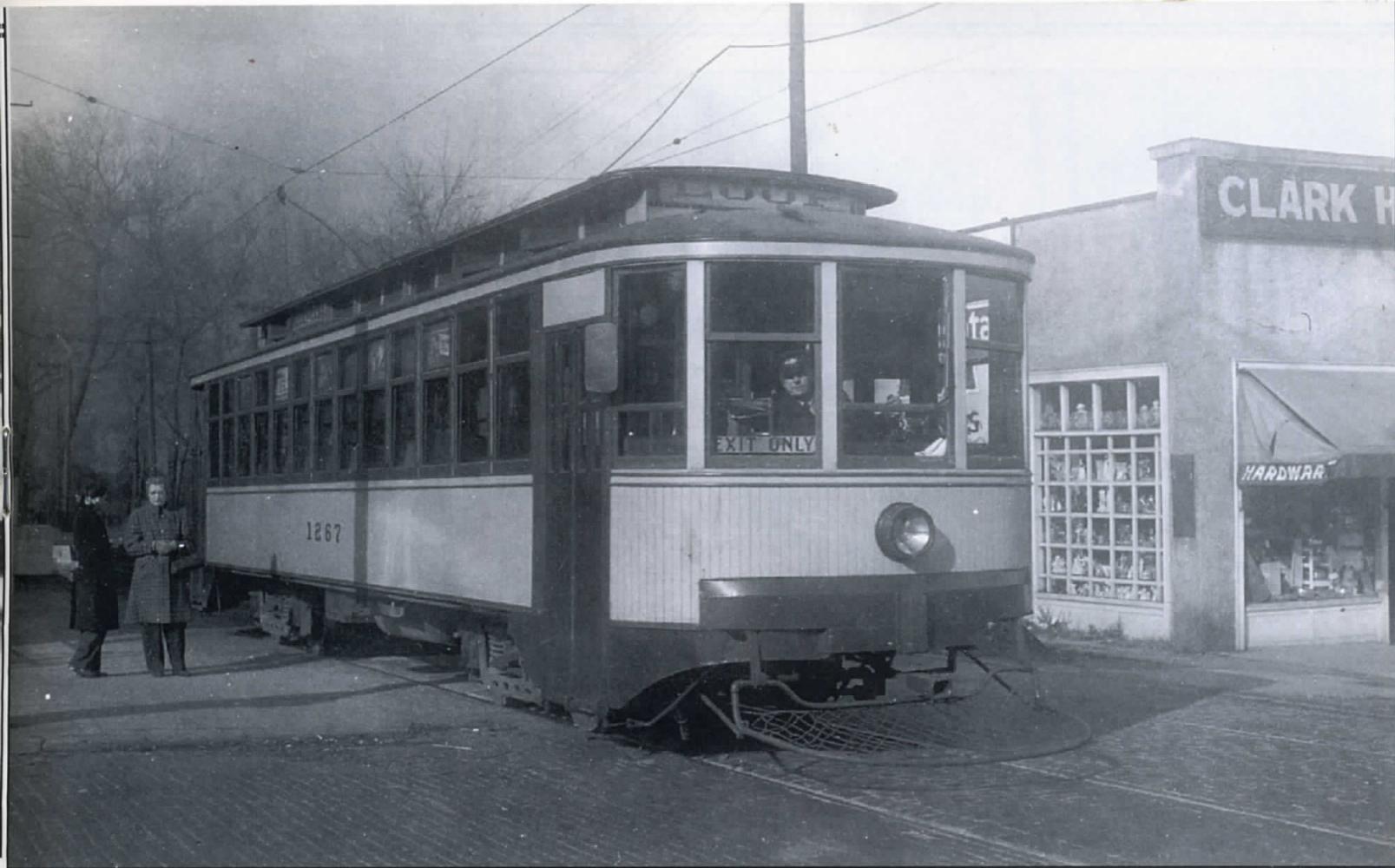


Above: The Linden Hills business district at Upton Avenue, about 1925. Creative Kidstuff now occupies the drug store at left, while the confectionery shop at right is now The Bibelot Shop.

Opposite page: Bayers Hardware was originally Clark Hardware and the streetcar tracks occupied the area now used for parking between the hardware store and Great Harvest Bakery. The car pictured, #1267 survives today at Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, ME.

Below: There was a station stop at Linden Hills Boulevard. The steps at left are still there, and the museum streetcar barn is now under the bridge. Edina Historical Society collection.





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About 1910, a streetcar lays over at the Lake Harriet loop, just east of Upton Avenue.
Minneapolis Public Library collection.

The Oak-Harriet cars left the 44th Street private right of way at Xerxes Avenue and ran south to 50th Street. This is looking north from 48th Street. Frank Butts photo.

TCRT cars used to sail on past the William Berry bridge fairly straight to the 36th Street bridge about four blocks away, which explains why they were able to reach such high speeds through the area.

After the abandonment of the Como-Harriet line in 1954, Lakewood Cemetery annexed all of the TCRT right-of-way and some of the land west of it from the William Berry bridge north to 36th Street

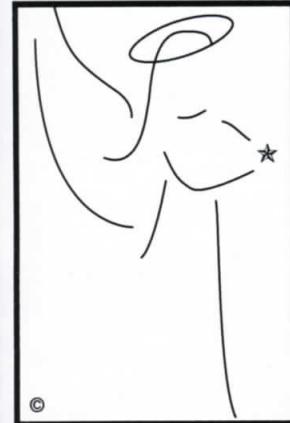
When members laid rail north of the bridge in the early 1970s, they had to plow through banks of dirt and cut down trees that had sprouted up since 1954. The track, instead of going straight ahead, had to be laid on a half left curve and follow the cemetery fence to Lake Calhoun to its current stop at about 37th Street. At that point, MTM's track is at least 100 feet west of the original right-of-way.

In 1954, the old 36th Street streetcar bridge was dismantled, the stone block abutments removed and the banks graded back into gentle slopes on both sides of 36th Street. Between 34th and 35th Streets, the old grade is still evident, with crossties and a station still in place.





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Between Upton and France Avenues, the tracks paralleled 44th Street, and much of the right of way remains in place today. This passenger is standing at Drew Avenue, waiting to board an eastbound car.



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Above: 44th and France, looking west. The turning loop is out of the picture to the right. The line down France Avenue branched off to the left. Were this not 1954, the streetcar would be headed west to Hopkins. S. D. Dimond photo.

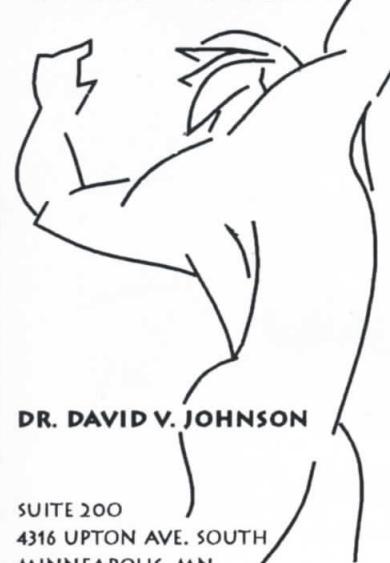




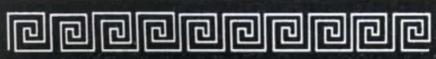
Above: 50th and France, in the early 1930's. The drugstore building is still there. The track in the foreground is a wye for turning the streetcars. Because of traffic, it was moved to 51st Street in 1934. Minneapolis Public Library collection.

Left: The last France Avenue car passes 46th Street in 1952. Edina wanted to repave its side of the street and took matters into its own hands, tearing up the track and paying for a substitute shuttle bus. Star-Tribune collection.

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Life aboard the cars. The conductor waits with transfer in hand for a lady boarding somewhere near Lake Harriet. Later he cranks coins and tokens through the farebox as the car rumbles down the street. Bob Schumacher photos.






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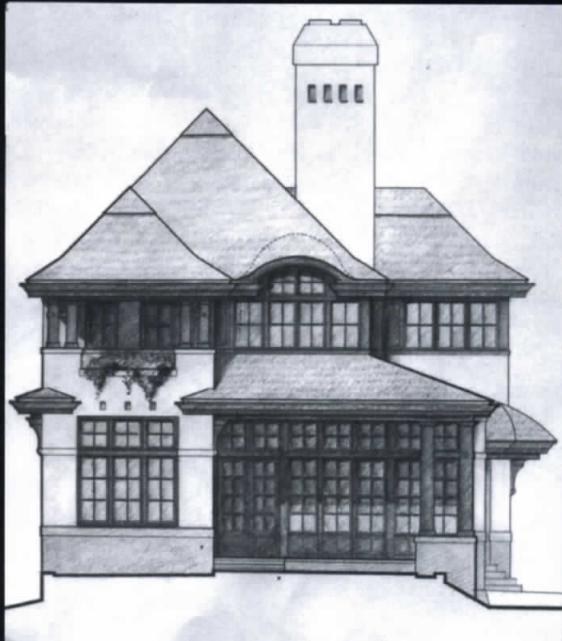
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The streetcars entered Hopkins from the east over this s-curving viaduct, which bridged three railroads. Fred Howarth photo, James Foster collection.

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THE MINNESOTA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM



The Minnesota Transportation Museum was formed to save a single streetcar, Twin City Lines #1300. Typical of the 1000 wood standard cars designed and built in the company's own shops, #1300 was one of only two that survived the 1954 TCRT abandonment completely intact. The other, #1267, resides at the Seashore Trolley Museum. A complete restoration has recently been completed.

#1300 was donated to the Minnesota Railfans Association, a group that specialized in railfan trips during the '40's, '50's and '60's before going out of existence. It was moved from TCRT's Snelling Shops in St. Paul to a siding in the western suburb of Hopkins in a way that would never be allowed today, on its own wheels in the consist of a regular freight train. There it sat for eight years, weathering under a tarp.

MTM was incorporated in 1962, and #1300 was moved to a stall in the Minnesota Transfer's roundhouse in St. Paul. A new roof was fabricated and all the bad wood in the carbody replaced. A generator was rigged up on a hand car to supply electricity and in May, 1963, it ran under its own power.

MTM was left with the question, "What now?". The car was done, but had no place to operate. Undeterred, MTM announced that #1300 would operate back and forth in the Transfer's rail yard for the public. Despite the



For eight years, car 1300 sat outdoors at the Minneapolis-Moline plant in Hopkins.
Ken Fletcher photo.

completely unglamorous setting, 10,000 people showed up over several days. The waiting line was a city block long at times, and the MTMers realized that the public would support an operating museum.

But where to operate? The best known and most scenic part of the Twin City Lines system had been the high speed private right-of-way to Lake Harriet in southwest Minneapolis. Upon abandonment in 1954, the Minneapolis Park Board had assumed ownership, but much of the grade lay untouched. MTM negotiated a lease. A simple metal carbarn was erected under the Linden Hills Boulevard bridge, in order to be as unobtrusive as possible. The first block-and-a-half of track was laid as far as the old Lake Harriet station at 42nd Street. Part of the original concrete platform was all that remained of the Swiss Chalet-style building. Operations began in 1971 sans overhead wire, using the noisy but reliable generator.

Overhead was strung in 1973. Gradually the line grew, reaching its

present terminus at Lake Calhoun in 1977. With #1300 running daily all summer long, there was clearly a need for a second car to share the load. Twin City Lines had sold dozens of car bodies for use as sheds or other structures. Members had made a small industry out of locating them and stripping any usable parts as a hedge against the future.

One of these forays into the north woods uncovered an expected treasure, Duluth car #265. Twin City Lines had owned the Duluth system and built most of its cars to standard TCRT designs at Snelling shops. #265 was actually built as TCRT #1791 in 1915, and was sold to Duluth in 1916. It ran there until the system was abandoned in 1939. The body was sold for use as a cabin at Solon Springs, Wisconsin. Despite its long slumber, the body remained in good shape thanks to a separate roof that was built over the original. In 1973, the car was transported to MTM's restoration shop. By this time, work had moved out of the Minnesota Transfer roundhouse to



10,000 found their way to a freight yard for #1300's first appearance in 1963. The incredible public response convinced the MTM volunteers that their future should be as an operating museum.



Looking north from the William Berry Road bridge. Lakewood Cemetery, on the right, took over the streetcar right of way after abandonment, so the museum tracks turn left at this point. James Foster collection.



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a building in the corner of BN's sprawling ex-Northern Pacific Como Shops complex in St. Paul. It helped that TCRT cars were designed to be stripped down every few years for repairs. #265 was completely disassembled and every piece of wood and metal was either repaired or replaced. The classic problem of no wheels, motors and electrical gear was solved by what model railroaders would call kit bashing. The museum acquired two trailer trucks from Chicago Transit Authority 4000-series L cars and motors came from a third-rail steeple cab locomotive that once served Northern States Power Company's steam plant at St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis.

Both #265 and #1300 had been built as "gate cars". The right rear corner consisted of large manually operated wire gates. All entry and exit was at the rear of the car. During the early 1930's streetcar systems everywhere converted to one man crews as an economy move.

Life, death and rebirth at Lake Harriet.

Top: May 1954, one month before the end of service. James Foster collection.

Bottom: All is desolation a couple of months after the last streetcar. The tracks are gone and the Lake Harriet station will disappear soon.

Opposite page: In 1971, after 17 year's absence, the streetcar tracks once again cross 42nd Street to the old concrete loading platform.



TCRT and Duluth were no exceptions, but rebuilt their wood cars differently. TCRT installed air powered double stream doors fore and aft, but maintained the overall aesthetic balance of the cars. Duluth put a wide door in front and a treadle-operated narrow one in the rear. In the process they changed the front window configuration and as a result, #265 looks lopsided.

#265 entered service in 1982. The restoration crew next tackled an even more ambitious project, Duluth 1893 Laclede single trucker #78. A typical car for its era, all that was left was the shell of a body. Many in the museum felt the project was hopeless. In fact, it should correctly be called a replication, since only half of the original wood has been retained and all of the running gear,

electrical system and interior furnishings are new or from other sources. The 1905 vintage power truck, for example, comes from Belgium. Nonetheless, after five years of diligent rebuilding #78 made its maiden run in 1990.

TCRT was unique in never owning a steel bodied car until the first PCC arrived in 1945. By 1949 there were 141 PCC's on the property, but all were sold in 1953, as new management prepared to convert to bus. They went to Newark, Shaker Heights and Mexico City and proved to be a durable group. Mexico City rebuilt theirs into unrecognizable articulates, and most have been retired. Today, 24 of them make up the entire fleet of the Newark Subway. Shaker Heights' cars ran through the early 1980's. Twelve were sold to Buffalo where they await rebuilding.

In 1977 Shaker Heights bought two of the Newark cars. Other than repainting and a few minor appliance differences, this pair, TCRT #322 and #416, has never been rebuilt. MTM always had a good relationship with the Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit Commission, now Metropolitan Council Transit Operations, and used that connection to buy the two cars in 1991. Car #322 is now receiving a

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In 1970, the historic William Berry Road bridge crossed over nothing except the raised mound hiding the water pipe between Lakes Calhoun and Harriet.

Here comes the MTM track crew in 1972.

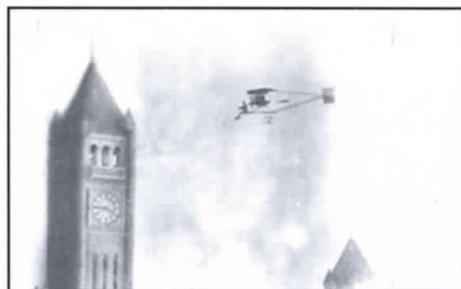




After eight years in the Minnesota Transfer roundhouse in St. Paul, #1300 rides the lowboy to Lake Harriet in 1971.



Teepees Downtown MPLS 1850



First flight over MPLS 1913



Minnehaha Falls 1905



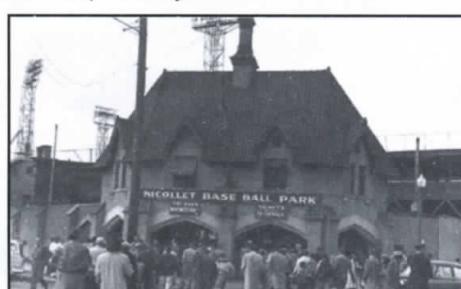
Lake Calhoun 1911



Minneapolis Skyline 1931



Lake Harriet Pavilion 1905



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Duluth Street Ry. #265 was identical to car #266 pictured here. Both ran until the Duluth streetcars were removed in 1939.

After nine years of restoration, #265 returned to service. Bill Graham photo.





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From 1939 until 1973, #265 was a used as a house addition in Solon Springs, WI. Wayne C. Olsen photo.

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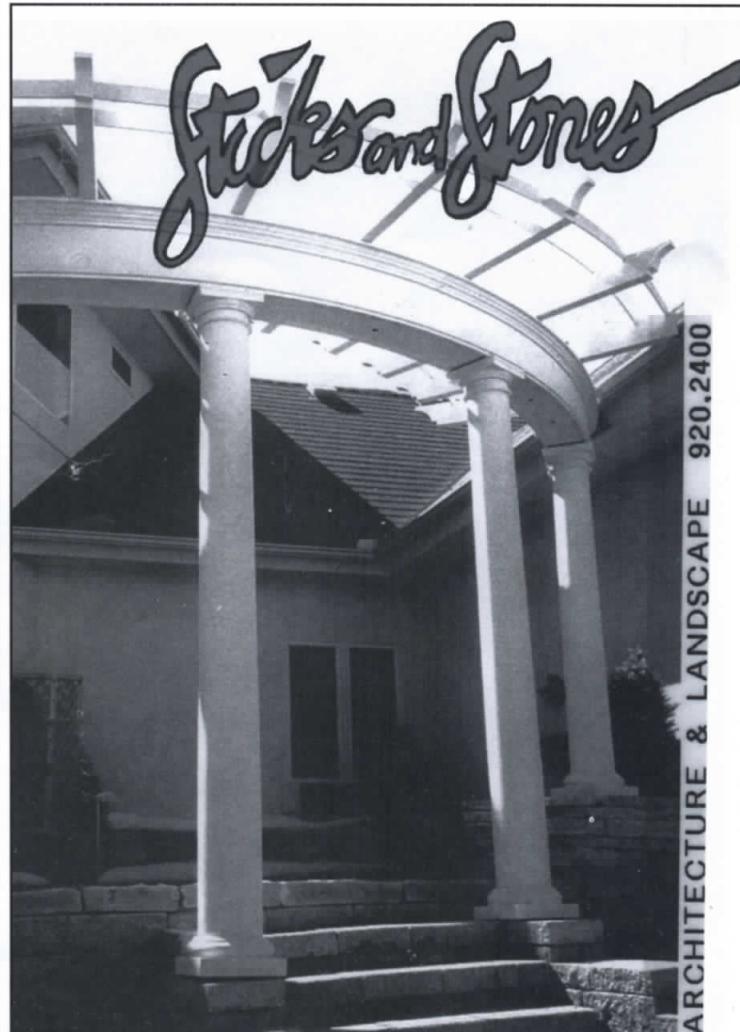
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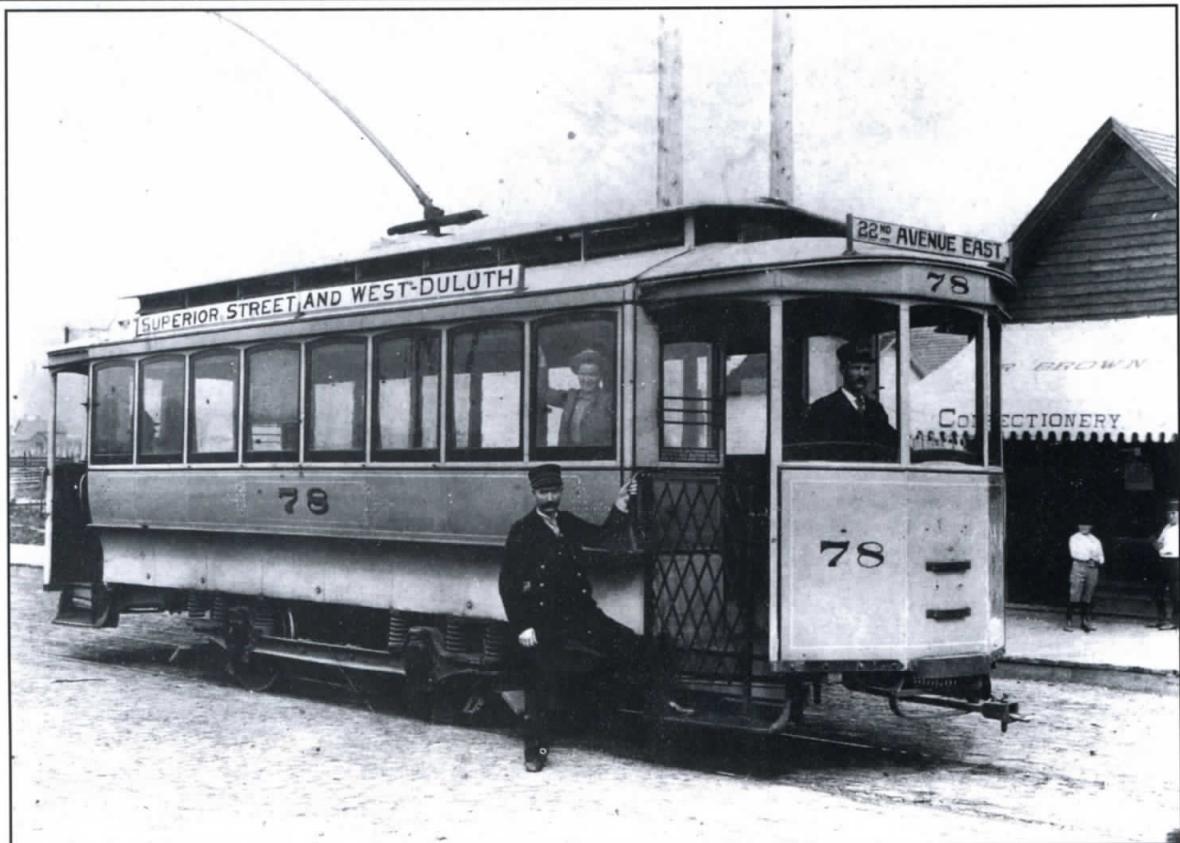
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Duluth Street Ry. #78 was only two years old when this was taken in 1895.

From its retirement in 1912 until MTM bought it in 1973, #78 was a shack in Duluth. Byron Olsen photo.



#322 was one of 140 identical PCC's. So far no in-service photo has been found, but here is sister #434 at the 44th and France loop.



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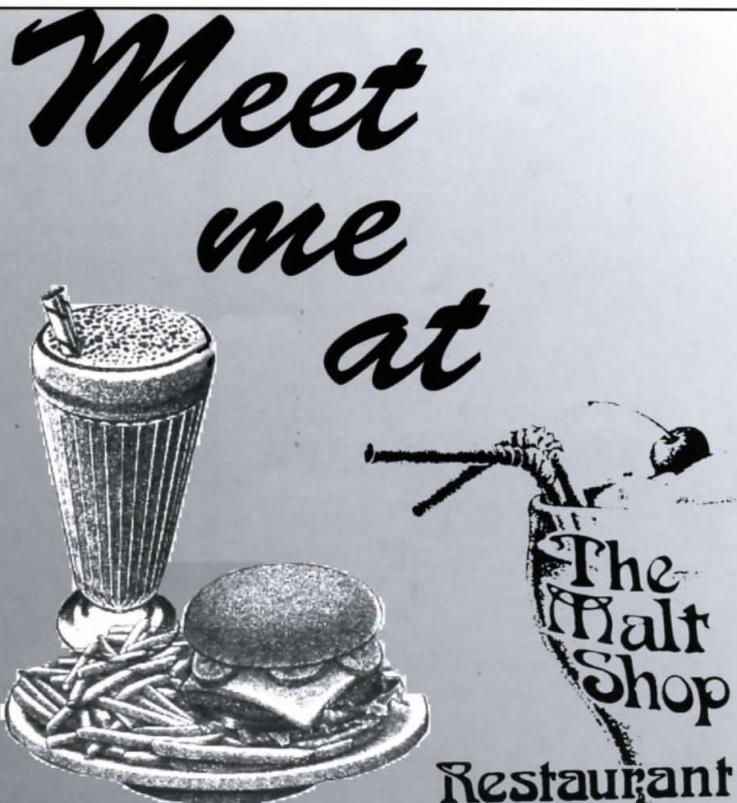


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complete rebuilding by MTM and MCTO volunteers at the MCTO Overhaul Base in St. Paul and has two to three years' work left.

In 1990 a replica of the 1900 Linden Hills depot was built on its original site. For the first time, the reborn streetcar line had a place to sell tickets and souvenirs, and to house interpretive displays. Beside large displays of historic photos and artifacts, a VCR plays videos, there is an interactive computer and a farebox and controller.

Normally funded mostly by fares, the Como-Harriet Line has received a federal ISTEA grant. It will be used to expand and improve the carbarn complex, upgrade track and restore some of the remaining TCRT station facilities.

The Como-Harriet Line today is a model for operating exhibits everywhere. There are completely documented rules and procedures. All crew members are in uniform and act in a highly professional manner. The track and equipment are in top shape. Ridership runs about 45,000 passengers per year. Over 1 million passengers have been carried in 26 years without incident.

For a current schedule of museum operations, call (612) 228-0263.



PCC car #322 is halfway through its restoration at the MCTO Overhaul Base in St. Paul. It will be moved to Lake Harriet in 1997 and will enter service in 1998. John DeWitt photo.

BECOME AN MTM MEMBER

Minnesota Transportation Museum is the largest all volunteer history organization in the state. Members can participate in a variety of activities including: restoration, maintenance, interpretation, operations, publication, research and administration. Please join us at one of the following membership levels.

Individual Membership:	\$25/year
Family Membership:	\$30/year
Sustaining Membership:	\$50/year
Sponsor Membership	\$100/year

Members are eligible to participate in museum activities, hold museum office, and vote in museum elections. Members receive the *Minnegazette*, the Museum's magazine. They are also permitted to ride free at the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line and free or at a reduced rate at the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway, and aboard the steamboat Minnehaha. Membership is tax deductible.

To join, send your membership fee along with your name, address, and phone number to:



Membership - Minnesota Transportation Museum
P.O. Box 17240, Nokomis Station
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417-0240

For more information about museum sites, activities and charter information please call our 24 hour info lines at:

(612) 228-0263 / (800) 711-2591

Rear cover top: 1893 Duluth car #78 at the Lake Calhoun end of the line.

Rear cover bottom: #1300 rolls around the "archery range" curve during a special winter operation. Aaron Isaacs photo.



Looking west from Xerxes Avenue along the 44th Street right of way.

An Oak-Harriet car prepares to turn around at the 50th and Penn wye.







MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

PO Box 16509
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www.TrolleyRide.org

August 2021

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